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SENATE

{ REPORT
No. 566

NATURALIZATION OF CERTAIN WORLD WAR VETERANS

APRIL 5 (calendar day, APRIL 10), 1926.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. REED of Pennsylvania, from the Committee on Immigration,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 9761]

The Committee on Immigration, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9761) to supplement the naturalization laws by extending certain privileges to aliens who served honorably in the military or naval forces of the United States during the World War, having had the same under consideration, reports it back to the Senate with amendments and recommends that the bill do pass as amended.

This bill will renew for the benefit of aliens who served honorably in our military or naval forces during the World War special exemptions providing for expeditious naturalization that were granted such aliens by war-time legislation which by limitation expired on March 3, 1924. Under former legislation, carried in the act of May 9, 1918, and in the sundry civil appropriation act of July 19, 1919, these alien war veterans were privileged to petition for citizenship in the most convenient court having naturalization jurisdiction. They were afforded immediate hearing by appearance before a naturalization examiner without first meeting the necessity of filing declarations of intentions or payment of fees, which usual requirements were waived. Upon proof of their right to receive such privileges, these aliens were afforded every facility for expeditious naturalization, conditioned on their ability to meet all the tests demanded by law of petitioners for citizenship.

The privileges to be extended by this bill are limited to those aliens, not ineligible to citizenship, who served honorably in the military or naval forces of the United States at any time after April 5, 1917, and before November 12, 1918, or during the time of actual hostilities, and who were not discharged from such forces because of alienage.

While there are no accurate figures as to the number who might avail themselves of the provisions of this bill, it may be interesting to know the number of alien war veterans of the United States who took advantage of the war-time legislation to become citizens. The Bureau of Naturalization reports the following numbers, by years:

1918.....	63,993
1919.....	128,335
1920.....	51,972
1921.....	17,636
1922.....	9,468
1923.....	7,109
1924.....	10,170

288,683

It appears that there are still many aliens who served honorably in our armed forces during the World War who, because of various reasons, did not or could not take advantage of the war-time preference legislation. Many aliens were under the mistaken apprehension that service in the armed forces of the United States automatically gave them citizenship. Indeed, it has been represented that many of these aliens were given the misguided advice that such service gave them citizenship, and that there are many of them living to-day who, having acted on that advice, believe themselves to be citizens. And there are other alien war veterans who are still undergoing treatment or who have but comparatively recently emerged from invalidism because of injuries received in the service, and who have never been able to complete their naturalization.

The privileges to be extended by this bill, as amended, will be for a period of two years from the date of its enactment. It is believed that this will be sufficient time to take care of all such cases of aliens who are desirous of becoming citizens. Without this legislation these aliens will have to meet the requirements of the naturalization laws as to filing of declarations of intentions, length of residence, and payment of fees, and they would suffer a great disadvantage compared with those aliens who were able to take advantage of the war-time preference legislation and whose service in our military forces was no more meritorious.

It is believed that the privileges given by this bill are but a measure of simple justice to those aliens who did not use the shield of their alienage to avoid service in our forces and who because of various reasons were unable to seize the opportunity for expeditious naturalization previously accorded. These aliens voluntarily met one of the greatest tests of patriotic citizenship. It is believed that every opportunity should be extended them so that they may without delay claim the rights of citizenship.

The American Legion has declared itself heartily in favor of the bill and urged its speedy enactment into law. The committee was given a copy of the resolution passed at its seventh annual convention at Omaha, Nebr., as follows:

Be it resolved by the seventh annual convention of the American Legion, That Congress be requested to enact legislation extending the naturalization time limit for honorably discharged veterans of the World War so they may be granted naturalization without fee.

In the second section of the bill as amended, provision is made for immigration of the same class of veterans as nonquota immigrants. A considerable number, perhaps 5,000, of our veterans secured their discharges from the Army while in Europe, in order to avail themselves of the opportunity to visit parents and relatives living abroad. Many of these men have settled permanently in foreign countries and do not desire to return, but there are some whose intention to return to the United States has never changed, but who have been forced to delay their return for family or business reasons. It has been earnestly urged to the committee by representatives of the American Legion and other veteran organizations that provision should be made to allow these men to return without awaiting the issuance of a quota visa, which in some countries would mean a delay of upwards of 10 years.

The committee feels that these veterans, most of whom saw battle service with our expeditionary forces, have earned the privilege which this bill confers. The attitude of the Department of Labor is shown by its report on S. 2608, containing provisions similar to the amendment which the committee now proposes as section 2 of this bill:

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR,
Washington, February 18, 1926.

Hon. HIRAM JOHNSON,
United States Senate, Washington, D. C.

MY DEAR SENATOR: Permit me to acknowledge your letter of January 27, 1926, in which you request my views on S. 2608, recently introduced by Senator Reed of Pennsylvania and entitled "A bill regulating immigration and naturalization of certain veterans of the World War."

Section 2 of S. 2608 adds to section 4 of the immigration act of May 26, 1924 (43 Stat. 153), another class of nonimmigrant aliens. It is clear that by this section of the bill it is intended to extend the nonimmigrant status for the period of one year to all male aliens who honorably served in certain military forces of the United States during the World War and who are otherwise admissible to the United States. It is noted that this section restricts the advantages of the bill to aliens who served in the Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps of our military forces. As before observed, the department has no comment to make on this point. Under section 25 of the immigration act of 1924, it will be noted, an alien must be admissible under the provisions of all other immigration acts. It is not necessary, therefore, that the clause relative to admissibility under other immigration laws be carried in S. 2608. As the immigration act of May 26, 1924, is considered to be in the class of permanent legislation, and, as the present section is proposed to expire within one year after its passage, it is felt that it would be more practicable not to include the provisions of this section within section 4 of the 1924 immigration act as a new paragraph designated "f." It is suggested therefore that section 2 of S. 2608 be rewritten to read as follows, slight changes being made from the text for the sake of clarity:

"Sec. 2. That to the classes of nonquota immigrants designated by section 4 of the immigration act of May 26, 1924, be added the following class, which class shall be subject to all the provisions of that act:

"An immigrant who served in the United States Army, the United States Navy, or the United States Marine Corps during the time the United States was engaged in the World War and was honorably discharged therefrom and who applies at a port of entry of the United States in possession of a valid unexpired nonquota immigration visa secured at any time within one year from the date of the passage of this act."

The change suggested in the new draft of limiting the terms of the bill to all who secure visas makes certain the application of the time period. This will prevent the hardships at ports of entry which certainly would occur on the arrival of such aliens after the expiration of the 12 months' period. By the proposed change the limitation of the act will be precisely applied at the source at the expiration of one year, that is, at the consular office abroad. As a nonquota

immigration visa is good for four months, aliens will have ample time in which to take advantage of the terms of the bill after securing a visa, may settle their affairs abroad, and secure steamship accommodations without fear of being debarred from entrance at our ports of entry in case of delays or accidents during the last months of the operation of the act.

Trusting that the views expressed may be found to be of some assistance to your committee, I beg to remain,

Cordially yours,

ROBE CARL WHITE,
Acting Secretary.